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THOMAS A. DESJARDIN
ACTING COMMISSIONER

EXHIBIT #VII.B.

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Thomas A. Desjardin, Acting Commissioner*

DATE: October 14, 2015

SUBJECT: Approval of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement Application and Supporting Documentation

BACKGROUND: On May 12, 2015, the 127th Legislature passed LD 428: An act to amend the powers of the State Board of Education to participate in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA). The SARA is an agreement among member states, districts and territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offerings of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. The SARA facilitates the process for resident students of Maine to enroll in online courses offered by out-of-state degree granting postsecondary institutions and permit Maine colleges and universities to offer degree programs in participating SARA states.

The Maine Department of Education will serve as the portal agency for SARA. The Maine Department of Education will investigate and resolve allegations of dishonest or fraudulent activity by a provider, including the provision of false or misleading information.

The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements review each state application and supporting documentation. The Chair of the State Board of Education initials the application and signs the cover letter for the New England Board of Higher Education. The Department of Education uploads the supporting documentation, application and letter.

RECOMMENDATION: That the State Board of Education approve the application and supporting documentation for full compliance with the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement and allow the Maine Department of Education to act as the portal agency. The Maine Department of Education will submit the application on behalf of the State Board of Education.

*Prepared by Ángel Martinez Loredó, Higher Education Specialist